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29 October 1965

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Comments on FBI Memorandum, "Dominican Situation Report"

1. This paper should be titled "Leftist activity in the Dominican Republic", rather than a general "Situation Report". Its account of leftist activities is generally true--although in some cases a bit out of date, as noted below. It is not, however, the whole truth of the current situation.
2. A more thorough situation report should include more on the activities on right wing extremists activities than the passing references given them in section VIII. Perhaps most important, it should give Garcia Godoy's rationale for his delay in dealing with the Communist threat. It is necessary to understand his motives, even if one disagrees with them. We disagree that he has "demonstrated a lack of awareness of the seriousness of the communist threat". He repeatedly has expressed his appreciation of that threat to Ambassadors Bunker and Bennett, and has acknowledged Communist gains under his government which should be reversed, once the government had control of the rebel zone. His failure to gain that control resulted from indecisiveness and distrust of the Dominican military--not from Communist sympathies.
3. There seems to be considerable misunderstanding in Washington of Garcia Godoy's promise to "vet" proposed appointees with the USG. He agreed only to accept information and advice from the US on certain "important" appointees--and "important" was not defined. Garcia Godoy was under no obligation to take the US' advice.
4. It should be noted, however, that the number of key cabinet level posts given to leftists is not excessive in a

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government of "reconciliation". It has been disturbing, however, that Garcia Godoy has given these individuals considerable freedom to carry out their activities. Moreover, by appointing a left wing Supreme Court, he has opened the door to the many other questionable judicial appointments the Court has made. The FBI, in some cases, however, tends to paint some individuals as further left than they actually are. The case of Fernandez Dominguez, the provisional government's Press Secretary, is an example. The FBI points out that he has been described as an ardent Communist who favors Castro, but fail to note that most observers feel Dominguez is, at worst, a radical member of Bosch's Dominican Revolutionary Party.

5. The FBI memo tends to portray the present military chiefs as the country's sole protectors against Communism. We tend to feel that while a strong military is very important to preventing an extreme leftist takeover, the retention of the present military chiefs is not necessarily a precondition for having a strong military. In fact, the retention of the present chiefs, who do not have the full confidence of either the public or the government, could tend in the long run to so alienate the general public from the military that the armed forces would become ineffective. At the same time we must point out that any changes in the military hierarchy must be made with the greatest care so as to strengthen and not weaken military leadership.

6. Garcia Godoy has assured Ambassador Bunker that the judicial police will not be a permanent force. What happens to it, of course, remains to be seen, but its permanence should not be taken as an accepted fact now.

7. The section on the left-wing press is out of date. Nacion and Patria have been closed down by the IAPF, although Patria continues to print a mimeographed sheet. Hardly a "daily volume" of propaganda.

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